

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2516

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, February 27, 2008

Title: An act relating to scoliosis screening in schools.

Brief Description: Eliminating requirements for scoliosis screening in schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Roberts, Schual-Berke and Loomis.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/08, 96-1.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education:2/27/08 [DP]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Tom, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Eide, Hobbs, Holmquist, Kauffman, McDermott, Oemig and Rasmussen.

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: Scoliosis is a disorder in which there is a sideways curve of the spine, or backbone. Treatment may include observation, bracing, or surgery. Surgery may involve fusing together two or more bones in the spine.

Under current Washington law, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must require scoliosis screening for public school students at least three times between fourth and eleventh grades. According to rules established by the Department of Health, students must be screened annually in fifth, seventh, and ninth grades. The procedures used must be consistent with the standards of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. State law requires that parents or guardians of any student who has or is suspected to have scoliosis are notified of the screening results and provided information about scoliosis and the services available from health care providers.

According to OSPI, in the 2004-05 school year, 148,813 students were screened for scoliosis in Washington. The screening program resulted in referrals to a health care provider for 3.39 percent of the screened students and .02 percent were braced or had surgery.

Summary of Bill: Legislative findings are made that conducting scoliosis screenings are not the best use of school health personnel resources and that the diagnosis and treatment of scoliosis are most appropriately managed through a primary care provider.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The statutes that establish the scoliosis screening program for public school students are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Engrossed Bill: PRO: We need to make sure the medical care we deliver at school is efficient and evidence based. Scoliosis screening is not necessarily the best use of school nurse time and needs to be left to primary care providers. The intent section explains that the evidence shows screening needs to be done in a different setting.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Lonnie Johns-Brown, School Nurse Organization of Washington.